



Office of the Governor

April 28, 2006

USDA Forest Service
SRS Comments
Lands 4S
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Mailstop 1124
Washington, DC 20250-0003

Dear Chief Bosworth:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Secure Rural Schools Land Initiative.

I do not support the sale of federal land as proposed in the Secure Rural Schools Land Initiative posted in the Federal Register February 28, 2006. Although there may be a need to sell or exchange tracks of Forest Service property to enhance management effectiveness, improve public access or increase federal land consolidation, this particular proposal falls far short of acceptability.

Revenue from the sale of these lands should not be used to supplement a fiscal responsibility outlined in statute. Although the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act helped to patch the decline in revenues to counties, a long-term solution that maintains funding to counties must be pursued.

As the Secure Rural Schools proposal stands now, Wyoming will contribute around 6% of the total land to be sold but will only see an economic return of 0.6% of the total funding. The current land initiative is nothing more than robbing Peter to pay Paul. If isolated tracks were to be sold, I would prefer to see the money reinvested as an endowment into each forest.

Replacing \$800 million of revenue to counties is going to be difficult. I believe Congress and the Forest Service should provide short-term financial support and then embark on finding a broader, long-term solution that does not dip into our nation's land resource to pay their short-term debts.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Freudenthal".

Dave Freudenthal
Governor

c: Mark Rey, Department of Agriculture
Senator Craig Thomas
Senator Mike Enzi
Representative Barbara Cubin